

THE CHAPLAIN AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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OUTLINE

- SUBJECT : The Chaplain's activities in public information and community relations.
- SCOPE : To acquaint Chaplains with their responsibilities and opportunities in the field of public and community relations.
- OBJECTIVES : A. To show that the fundamental principles of public and community relations are as applicable to the Chaplain as to other officers and men in the Armed Forces.
- B. To discuss the Chaplain and his public information and community responsibilities and opportunities.
- DISCUSSION : A. A definition of public relations
- B. The Internal public information activities of the Chaplain.
- C. The External public information activities of the Chaplain.
- D. The means available for the public information and community relations activities of the Chaplain.

CONCLUSION

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Since public information, like public relations can be defined as "Any planned program or procedure which will elicit public understanding and good will,"¹ the chaplain must constantly be aware of the fact that wherever there are people, soldiers or civilians there is public relations. Some people have more numerous and vital public relations than others but no person is, or can be free of them. Every Chaplain has his public, the groups or group with whom he has contact. Briefly stated then "Public relations is a program of devising and carrying out policies which so reveal, instruct and attract as to gain public approval for a person, cause or institution."² The Chaplain's public relations should always be productive of better understanding, not only of his information program, but of the public that he seeks to reach.

Public relations is not synonymous with publicity, even though the two terms frequently are used interchangeably. "Public relations is indispensable; publicity is optional."³ Every legitimate avenue of publicity is to be regarded as an important segment of public relations, but it is only a segment.

It should be observed also that good public relations is not a procedure for emergencies only, it's greatest good comes through continuous employment. Like advertising, it's value is cumulative. There will be times when the tempo of this program will need to be stepped up but it can never be dropped entirely. Neither is one justified in considering public relations merely as a supersalesman, although its influence eventually will sell any commodity for which it gains favorable public opinion.

¹ Christopher E. Persons, Public Relations For Colleges And Universities, Stanford University Press, 1946.

² Eugene D. Dalloff, The Pastors Public Relations, Judson Press, 1959. ?

³ Eugene D. Dalloff, The Pastors Public Relations, Judson Press, 1959. ?

The cause of the chaplain certainly is a just cause, he seeks to bring a better understanding between men, to raise the standard of morality among men and to excite men to justice in dealing with one another. The cause of the Chaplain is the greatest cause of all men because he seeks to instill in them the spirit of the golden rule whereby men might live in peace and harmony. The goal of the Chaplain is to bring God to men and men to God.

The Chaplain, in uniform represents one of America's greatest institutions, the United States Army and at the same time exercises his role as a clergyman. In this dual capacity the Chaplain will do well to remember his responsibility as an officer and as a spiritual leader of his people. His objective should be "to influence and direct men in such a way as to obtain their willing obedience, confidence, respect, and loyal cooperation in order to accomplish his mission."⁴

Good public relations reveal facts that inhance favorable public opinions, whereas poor public relations has the opposite effect. This explains why all business concerns, as well as the Armed Forces, colleges and many other organizations do their utmost to develop the best possible public relations. Public relations represents one of the most commanding challenges to every Chaplain, for his success or failure will be largely conditioned by his determination and ability to develop good public relations.

Upright character is a prime requisite for the Chaplain, indeed in indispensable one, yet goodness in itself is not enough. To goodness, the Chaplain must add the best possible public and community relations.

The Chaplain will do well to know the potentials of his position in the matter of public information, for his effectiveness normally increases in proportion to the respect and good will he enjoys. If the Chaplain is to obtain the maximum degree of appreciation toward his work and his position, he must plan

⁴ FM 22-100, Military Leadership, DA, 1958. P 7

his work with care. Good public relations do not just happen, they are almost always the result of hard work, dedication and proper prior planning.

Many people with whom the Chaplain has to deal with directly forget that he is made of the same nature as they. People generally expect the Chaplain to be a veritable paragon of perfection. "They thoughtlessly insist that he have the meekness of a lamb, the disposition of an angel, the loyalty of an apostle, the faithfulness of a prophet, the devotion of a father, the tenderness of a mother, the fervency of an evangelist or on and on until the list seems endless."⁵

It will be well for a Chaplain to remember that the people he serves have a right to expect certain commendable character qualities in his life. A few are listed, faith, courage, industry, honesty, enthusiasm and optimism. A combination of commendable character qualities and proper prior planning will go far in preparing the Chaplain to do an effective work.

The Information Program of the Chaplain should be directed toward two primary areas. The first is to elicit understanding and good will from the military community which he serves, and second to remember that his program is a part of the larger program in public relations and information executed by the Army Information Officer.

The Chaplain has a three-fold information function: To keep the Army and its personnel informed about his spiritual program, to keep the civilian public informed about the moral and spiritual activities within the Army, and to keep his own religious group informed about his activities. "Since the Chaplain in the Army represents a recognized religious denomination, his ecclesiastical

⁵ Eugene D. Dolloff, The Pastors Public Relations, Judson Press, 1959.

status obliges him to observe the rules and regulations of his denomination and to maintain an active and continuing membership in his church."⁶

The Chaplain should maintain close and friendly ties with his church organization both local and general. Under the provisions of AR 630-5, a Chaplain may attend conferences and meetings of his denomination or engage in spiritual exercises, or religious retreats sponsored by his denomination.

There is no phase of the life of the soldier in which the Chaplain does not show an interest and proper concern. The Chaplain from experience knows that the civilian church can assist him in his ministry by showing interest in their young members whom they send to the military service. From the time the young soldier enters the Army it is the responsibility of the Chaplain to make every effort to assist him. He can best do this through his information activities.

Since the Chaplain and the Information Officer are members of the commanding officer's Special Staff, and since both deal with people, they are both equally interested in public relations. People are both the subject of object of public information. With this in mind, the Chaplain will endeavor to devise and promote a policy or program which will inform people and attract favorable public opinion. He is not a supersalesman yet he is interested in popularizing his product.

The military and civilian community often expect the Chaplain to be a thorough scholar, a devoted pastor, a skilled counselor, a financial genius and a flaming evangelist. He is expected to be a specialist in religious education, a commanding social leader, a church school teacher, a dramatic

⁶ FM 16-5, The Chaplain, DA 1958.

coach, a brilliant preacher who fills every seat in the chapel on Sunday.

If the Chaplain is to accomplish his mission he will coordinate his activities with the Information Officer and at the same time advertise his activities to all members of the command. Post newspapers, unit bulletin boards, daily bulletins, staff conferences and personal contacts are only a few of the means available to the Chaplain for keeping his spiritual program in the foreground.

In relying for much of his effectiveness, as a Chaplain, on the good will and appreciation engendered by his person and his program, the Chaplain operates on the basis of personal service rather than that of compulsory training for the acceptance of his ministry. No single source of public confidence is of greater importance than the Chaplains personal example. "While the development of the highest standards of conduct and character are incumbent upon all members of the military, the Chaplain has even greater personal responsibilities in this area for he is the representative of religion and morality in the Command."⁷

One of the most important functions of the Chaplain's Internal Public Information Activities is the worship service. The Sunday or week-day service, therefore, is not an item in the Chaplain's program that can be treated lightly.

Public worship is defined as "Seeking and apprehending the presence of God."⁸ It is further defined as "an act of paying divine honors, such as reverence, homage, adoration sacrifice, praise prayer, thanksgiving, and reverence to the Supreme being or God. In true worship there should be a feeling of awe and the showing of respect by external action of such character as one would show almighty God alone."⁹

⁷ Air Force Regulation 190-6, Public Relations, 15 May 1950. *cite*

⁸ Air Force Regulation 165-3, Air Force Chaplain Program. *cite*

The Chaplain who would practice a proper relationship with his military public should give not only proper connotation of the words he speaks, but remember that he is presenting to his public the words of Him who sent him to declare them. The acceptable Chaplain ought to be a man of outstanding faith; faith in God, faith in his fellowman and faith in himself. "For without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."⁹

The Chaplain must live by faith, see by faith, walk by faith and if he is to die victoriously, he must die by faith. Realizing the eternal implications of his responsibility as the voice of God to the people, no worship service should be entered into lightly or indifferently.

Hymns have always had a prominent place, and have been an important element in worship. "The most effective bond between Christianity today is found in the hymns which are common to the people of all faiths and creeds, for time has proven them true to the general experience of Christians. It is safe to say we have no medium of expression which is more helpful by way of nourishment of our spiritual lives and religious culture."¹⁰ What is said for worship and hymns in the Christian faith is no less true for those of the Jewish religion.

The Chaplain, whether he be Minister, Priest or Rabbi will keep constantly in mind that the chapel is not a theatre or only a place to meet, but a place dedicated to the call of God to men, and that the religious service, whether in the chapel, a religious facility or in the field is still a service dedicated to the call of men for God.

⁹ The Bible, Hebrews 11:6. ?

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Robert G. McCutchen, Hymns In The Lives of Men, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943.

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The elements of a truly religious service are a compelling sense of adoration, praise and thanksgiving, and are not items of the Chaplain's Program that can be treated lightly. Standards of propriety and dignity require careful preparation and effective leadership, "in short, they call for a kind of planning which is essential to any kind of public information."¹¹

No Chaplain can afford to give evidence of carelessness in the handling of the truth. His message should be prepared in such a manner that men will be drawn nearer to God and His truth of life. "The Chaplain's words should indicate to all concerned that they have been prepared in the presence and with the help of the Spirit of God. This calls for much meditation, research, observation and reflection, however, respect and prestige are bound to follow."¹²

The Religious Education function of the Chaplain's Program should be of the highest standards attainable. Two things are necessary for an effective Religious Education Program in the military; good teaching and good teaching material. "Teaching the Christian faith is serious business. There is no more important function than this. It is, therefore, incumbent upon all those who would serve in the Lord's vineyard to prepare themselves to render an adequate accounting of their stewardship. Good teaching does not come by accident. Only as consecrated people study and prepare themselves for more effective leadership will the lives of children, youth and adults be enriched. Conscientious effort on the part of all true disciples is required if the religious training of persons is to result."¹³

¹¹ Air Force Regulation 35-31, Air Force Character Guidance Program, 17 Nov 1948. *calc*

¹² Air Force Letter 35-479, Airman Chaplain Career Field, 22 July 1949. *in*

¹³ Teaching in the Armed Forces Protestant Religious Education Program, Witherspoon Press. *etc.*

Each teacher, used by the Chaplain in his Religious Education Program must know what he believes and why. It is not enough that he is able to give an answer to a question. His faith must be alive and vital. He must love the Lord and desire to serve Him. The teacher should know how learning takes place. "Learning is a process which is characterized by well-defined principles. As the leader becomes a part of this process, his work becomes effective in the lives of those he seeks to lead."¹⁴

The good teacher will consider the age group and become adept in the use of teaching techniques that are most effective in the guidance of the pupils with whom he works. Teaching skills are not inherited, their mastery comes as the result of study and experience. The good teacher will be a growing one. He will read widely and study ways and means by which his teaching skills may be improved.

The material used by teachers in the Chaplain's Religious Education Program must be carefully selected. Teachers are entitled to understand the background and purpose of the materials used, and how they may contribute to the pupils' religious growth, how these materials may be used most effectively and creatively, how they may be adapted to the unique circumstances of life on a military base, how to take into account any unusual circumstances of life on a military base, how to take into account any unusual circumstances such as conditions in other parts of the world.

The purpose of any curriculum taught in the Educational system "is to help the teachers and other leaders to do a more effective piece of work as they use the tools which are made available to them in the Unified Curriculum."¹⁵

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Teaching in the Armed Forces Protestant Religious Education Program, Witherspoon Press. ✓

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Orientation Course - Religious Education Committee, Armed Forces Chaplain Board Page 2. ✓

The Unified Protestant Sunday School curriculum for Armed Forces is an effort to make available suitable materials for Protestant Church Schools at military installations.

The Unified Curriculum recommendations for each church school year are selected annually by the Chaplains who form the Religious Education Committee of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board with the following ideas in mind: the material so arranged that pupils moving from post to post throughout the world will continue their Christian education in a consistent and orderly progression, the material is acceptable for use by many denominations, is based on the great tenets of Christian faith and life on which there is general agreement among Protestants and is related to the needs of age groups and the teaching situations. 5
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The Daily Vacation Bible School, the annual Children's Christmas Party, and any other activity created, sponsored or supported by the Chaplain should be so organized, executed and supervised as to bring credit and respect, not to the Chaplain himself, but to the God he serves and the Army which he represents. Effective public relations in this field require proper planning and the establishment of definite objectives. 7

There is no greater scope of public relations from a personal contact basis for the Chaplain than that of personal counseling. Everyone at times needs someone else to talk to. "Social and economic changes during the past fifty years have made counseling and guidance increasingly necessary, especially in circumstances such as expanded military service where individuals are exposed to privations and frustrations through separation from families and through exposure to combat."¹⁶

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The Chaplain As Counselor, DA Pam, April 1958. J

Counseling is a human requisite because it stems from man's need of communication. Not only must he talk to some one else, but he has to hear a reflection of his own feeling from others. Without some type of communication, whether it be prayer, symbols speech or example, man would find it practically impossible to live. Counseling provides that special type of communication dealing with behavior problems, such as the blocking of speech, thought or emotions.

The Chaplain has religious and moral standards and must hold to them. In the counseling situation the source of greatest influence and power to the Chaplain and at the same time the source of greatest help and benefit to the counselee, will be his religious, spiritual and moral ideas. He is essentially a man of God in all his dealings with his fellow man, including counseling.

The proper aim, then, of the Chaplain as the counselor is to foster an atmosphere in the counseling relationship that will produce a new or changed attitude in the person being counseled. Since counseling for Chaplains consist mainly of dealing with military personnel and their families in the interpersonal relationship of interviews. It should be stated that Chaplains are limited as to the methods, the intensity and results of counseling.

The care of souls is one of the heaviest responsibilities of the Chaplain. "When an Army Chaplain counsels, his long range purpose is the salvation of the counselee's soul. The goal at the beginning may be fogged with ignorance, fears and various sorts of unexplainable present behavior. Before the vista of eternal value can be appreciated, there may be a task at hand to remove the obstructions. This requires great skill."¹⁷

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The Chaplain As Counselor, DA Pam, April 1958.

One of the broadest fields of Chaplain public relations in the military is the Character Guidance Program. "The Character Guidance Program has been devised to assist the commander in promoting healthy mental, moral and social attitudes in the personnel under his command. By this program the Army endeavors to maintain the wholesome influence of family, community, and cultural heritage, from which stem our esprit and strength as a free nation.

The Character Guidance Program is designed to encourage high standards of personal conduct among members of the Army. It aims to strengthen in the individual those basic moral, spiritual, and historical truths which motivate the patriot and which undergird the Code of Conduct."¹⁸

Since the Chaplain will normally be the instructor for all Character Guidance training and since commanders will insure that all officers and enlisted personnel will receive the scheduled monthly instruction or orientation, the Chaplain will do his utmost to prepare and present a suitable Program of Instruction for the Character Guidance presentation.

In the religious rites the Chaplain performs, the military visits he makes and the personal contacts he encounters, a sincere concern for the spiritual welfare of his people will do much in making his public information activities a success. will be

As the Chaplain considers his external public information activities, he must be aware that these are intervened with community relations. These community relations are an important part of the Chaplain Program and gains significance in view of the increasing community aspects of the more stable military post, both in Continental United States and in overseas theaters.

The community has many resources on which the Chaplain can draw to assist in his work when the desired spirit of cooperation is established. The soldiers contact with the community is an important part in his individual life for good or bad. The Chaplain needs to know how the soldier is received in the community and to do what he can to open the constructive elements of the community life to the soldier.

The fact that the Army today has in it for short periods of time the "Civilian soldiers" who come from the community and after a relatively short time returns to the civilian community creates a natural interest on the part of the community concerning life in the Army. This interest can be in part satisfied by bringing the civilians, especially those in position of community leadership, onto the post with the opportunity to see and perhaps take part in activities.

The activities of the Chaplain in fostering and maintaining wholesome military-civilian relationship, in utilizing opportunities available in the civilians community to help him accomplish his primary mission, and in making a contribution to the civilian community may be considered as public information and ecclesiastical liaison.

The Chaplain exists in the Army today through the concern and establishment of the various religious groups of the nation. With this in mind, the Chaplain must recognize the need and fairness of telling the people, military and civilian, what he is doing and what he plans to do. The responsibility of providing the informational material necessary belongs to the Chaplain. To be accurate and comprehensive it must come from him.

The channels of dissemination will differ, some being directly through the Chaplain, some through the local public information officer and some from higher

sources such as the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, and the Department of the Army. Various media may be used, including personal appearances of the Chaplain, bulletins and posters, newspapers, local and general magazines and radio and television.

In every instance of community public relations, the Chaplain must know the current public information policy of the Army and of his headquarters and be sure that his public information activities are in harmony with policy and that all necessary coordination has been accomplished.

The fostering of a cordial understanding with local representatives and leaders of activities and organizations creates opportunities for religious, social, and cultural contacts and activities for military personnel in communities adjacent to installations. The Chaplain should keep the churches informed and interested in the spiritual and moral guidance of the men in the Army. The individual denominations should realize their responsibility toward the men in the service. Especially when a soldier is overseas a letter from his pastor and from church groups help tremendously in cementing church ties.

In helping to increase the ecclesiastical liaison between the military and the civilian community the Chaplain can attend meetings of the local groups of clergymen of other denominations as well as his own. Establish better military-civilian relationship through the exchange of pulpits, choirs and joint services. He can invite young peoples groups to special military services, treat all civilian clergymen as VIP's and display posters and announcements of special civilian services.

Cooperation, on the part of the Chaplain, in aiding the program of the church service clubs and recreational centers, such as Catholic Youth Clubs,

Jewish Centers and denominational service clubs, will increase his influence in the community. He, in turn, can invite civilian clergymen of various denominations to participate in patriotic ceremonies. The Chaplain should maintain contact with the Reserve Chaplains of the civilian community and become acquainted with the leaders of church owned schools.

The Chaplain, in his staff relationship as religious, moral and morale advisor to the command, should meet and make himself known to the civilian authorities of near-by communities. There should exist a feeling of mutual trust and respect between the Chaplain and these authorities. The following civilian authorities are very helpful in solving various problems that arise between military personnel and the community, the city mayor, the police authorities, housing authorities, public and social agencies, public and parochial school authorities and hospital personnel.

The Chaplain should seek to cooperate harmoniously with the representatives and workers of civilian organizations authorized to make contributions to the welfare of military personnel and their dependents, such as the P.T.A. and community forums; the Chamber of Commerce; Civic groups and Veteran organizations.

One of the more important areas of concern for the Chaplain is the civilian recreation activities. "The Chaplain should keep in close contact with the recreational areas which his men frequent on off-duty time. He should be concerned with the moral tone of programs given, the type of hostesses chosen, and the cultural values presented by Service Clubs, YMCA's and USO's. He should be well acquainted with the directors of these facilities. The Chaplain may be of assistance in the providing and the presentation of various programs in the civilian community."¹⁹

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Civilian Community Relations, U. S. Army Chaplain School, Fort Slocum, N.Y., July 1958.

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The overall and primary objective of the Chaplains public information and community relations activity is to influence public opinion.

"Public opinion has been defined as the sum total of individual judgements and opinions - now uniform and now conflicting of the men and women who make up any community or social group. To qualify as a group, or "Public" they must share common elements of environment and inheritance, and common sources of information and discussion."²⁰

No one can deny the fact that "all military personnel have a part in Army public relations,"²¹ and no one plays a greater part in molding public opinion through public information than does the Army Chaplain. Frequently Chaplains fail to publicize their spiritual activities because they are unacquainted with the means available for publishing information.

The press serves as one of the most effective mediums for the dissemination of information relating to the religious activities of the Chaplain. He may use Army authorized newspapers, civilian enterprise newspapers distributed on and off the military post, local community newspapers and denominational newspapers.

Since news is any printed or spoken report of a recent event or situation, calculated to interest, inform or entertain the public the Chaplain should avail himself of every opportunity to utilize the press.

An example of "Major Faith" Chaplain relationship in publicizing the Armed Services Program is shown on the following page.

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Army Talk 122, War Department, Washington, D. C, 11 May 1946.

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Officers Call, Volume 3, Number 8.

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The Chaplain must realize that news is anything timely which interests a number of people and should seek to abide by the basic rules for the preparation of his news releases. He should always use facts and not personal opinions, the language should be brief and simple, the story accurate and coherent, his punctuation accurate, and his news releases prompt.

Recent occurrences are more news-worthy than those which happened a year ago. The personnel of a military installation are far more interested in the chapel activities of that installation than military personnel at another post; therefore, the Chaplain's news release should be timely and express nearness.

"Writing suitable copy for newspapers is relatively simple if you keep in mind the five W's - who, what, when, where and why, the fundamental basis of any story. Journalism text books tell you to build a news story like an inverted Pyramid with the five W's fed into the broad base which is the top of the story. The essential elements should be in the opening paragraph or lead."²²

Since the press is one of the most effective means of disseminating news, the Chaplain will make every effort to utilize not only newspapers stories, but magazine articles as well.

"Many Chaplains have not yet learned the true value of the press as an instrument for Propagating Christianity,"²³ but the Chaplain who would have a successful ministry in public information will use newspapers, denominational journals, magazines and other publications in his public relations activities.

If the Chaplain believes that "Religion can win the world - provided the voice of the local church is heard"²⁴ he will make every effort to utilize

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Holt Mc Pherson, Churchmen Let's Go To Press, The Methodist Press. ✓

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The Baptist Program - Southern Baptist Convention, April 1955.

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Public Relations Manual, Stuber, Page 7. ✓

photography, radio talks, TV appearances, and the press in seeking to present his public information and community relation activities to the community at large.

It must, therefore, be concluded from the foregoing discussion that for all practical purposes the only limitation to the public information and community relation activities of the Chaplain is his time and energy. No man on the commander's staff or under his command has a more important role than the Chaplain.

The Chaplain who practices good public and community relations intelligently adds immeasurably to the efficiency of his spiritual program, and to the credit of the military service.

In all his dealings with the military and civilian community the Chaplain performs with the authority of his commanding officer. The efficient Chaplain will keep his commanding officer informed at all times of his public information and community relations activities, as well as the implications of those activities.

The Chaplain in the military has a dual relationship. He is an officer and at the same time a member of a clergy group in good standing. He has, therefore, over and above his military responsibility a responsibility also to his own church.

The Chaplain is not an Information Officer and anything that he does in relation to the Civilian community should be done in cooperation with and with the consent of the regularly appointed Information Officer of his post.

The military Chaplain should establish an SOP and general plan of operation to fulfill his function as a member of the public relations team.

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